A study on analysis of managerial attitudes towards ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system introduction and implementation process in Sri Lanka

P. M. C. Thilakarathne, S. K. C. Chithrangani

Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

Email address:
lal@kln.ac.lk (P. M. C. Thilakarathne), chamachithrangani1983@gmail.com (S. K. C. Chithrangani)

Abstract: ISO certification is expected to help organizations to enhance quality and efficiency, improve communications, achieve competitive advantage and to increase in market share, reduce costs and achieve a high stock price. The successful implementation of the ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system standard depends on how the standard is perceived by the companies, therefore identification of managerial perception for ISO 9001 system is vital. This research paper presents the results of an investigation carried out to identify managerial attitudes towards ISO 9001: 2008 quality management systems. To realize this goal, a sample consisting of 73 managers, representing both top and middle managers were selected from organizations functioning in Sri Lanka, covering all sectors including manufacturing, services, construction and others. Data were gathered using self administered questionnaire, through an email survey. Results indicated that Sri Lankan companies have high level of understanding for the purpose of ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system; by both certified groups for ISO 9001: 2008 and organizations those commenced the quality management system implementation. The main motivating factors behind the implementation of ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system for both certified companies and organizations already commence the implementation are to achieve quality improvement. The second most motivator for certified organization is to meet the corporate objectives. The principle perceived benefits of implementing ISO 9001: 2008 by both groups are customer satisfaction, increase quality awareness and reduces the production time. None of the parameters analyzed for understanding the purposes of selecting ISO 9001 quality management system and motivational factors for seeking certifications were statistically significant in both groups. Furthermore this investigation concluded that there is an impact towards ISO 9001: 2008 quality management systems by both certified organizations and organizations those commenced the quality system implementation in Sri Lanka. In addition to that study reveals that majority of organizations are seeking certifications irrespective of their sector and type of the organizations. Therefore, this research is vital for making policy decisions of organizations those who anticipate to implement quality management systems for their operations in the future.

Keywords: ISO 9001: 2008, Quality Management Systems Certifications, Managerial Attitudes

1. Introduction

It has been revealed that organizations have been concerned with quality for many years but only past twenty years have they really began to implement specific measures to achieve high rate of quality (Dreyfus et al., 1999). ISO 9001 establishes a basic set of quality system requirements necessary to ensure that the process is capable of consistently producing products that meet the customer's expectations. Products and services are the result of activities or processes that transform inputs into outputs and the quality of products and services is directly related to the quality of the process that produces them. Therefore, product quality improvement necessitates process quality improvement (Tigani, 2011). Although quality management practices need to be adopted in Sri Lankan organizations in order to enhance their business performance, such efforts face an enormous challenge due to many negative reasons. The challenge is mainly due to the cultural and behavioral mismatch within Sri Lankan organizations when they try to practice quality management within their organizational boundaries (Nanayakkara, 1992). It has been found that the reforms and innovative programmes introduced in public

sector organizations in Sri Lanka are less compatible with the attitudes and skills of the organizational participants. Therefore, those innovative programs become simply technical, rather than managerially meaningful to the organizations (Samarathunga and Bennington, 2002). In a study carried out by Magd and Curry (2003) confirmed that the implementation of ISO 9001 quality management system standard depends on how the standards is perceived by the companies. Moreover implementation and impact of ISO 9001 standard vary from organization to organization and country to country. Having considered the above research evidences and facts researchers identified there is a necessity for carrying out an investigation to identify the perception/ attitudes towards ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system in Sri Lanka, as there were very little known about management attitudes towards ISO 9001 system. Therefore this research was outlined to examine the managerial perception towards ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system among Sri Lankan companies. The main objectives of this study were to evaluate the management attitudes towards ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system in Sri Lanka and to identify the perceived benefits of implementing ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system requirements in Sri Lankan companies. The research problem of this study was to investigate whether there is an impact of managerial attitudes/ perception towards the implementation of ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system in Sri Lanka.

Remainder of this research organizes as follows. Section two reviews the literature and section three discusses the descriptive methodological approach in the study. Section four reports results of analysis and discussion and section five concludes the paper.

2. Literature Review

The ISO 9000 standards are based on the concept that certain minimum characteristics of a quality management system could be usefully standardized, giving mutual benefit to suppliers and customers, and focusing on process rather than product/service quality (Dick et al., 2002).

According to Casadesus et al.,(2000), perceptions of the benefits of ISO 9000 have eroded over the last few years in spite of the changes and improvements supposedly provided by the latest version of the standard. However, many studies have suggested that organizations certified for longer periods of time tend to garner greater benefits than more recently certified organizations because they have had more time to integrate improvements derived from ISO 9000 (Escanciano et al. , 2001).

Pheng (2001),has confirmed that many approaches to quality management, including TQM hardly give long-term success to organizations. This is mainly because of the problematic nature of organizational culture (OC) within which managers find it difficult to practice their quality management practices.

Furthermore Samaratunga and Bennington (2002), con-

firmed that the reforms and innovative programmes introduced in public sector organizations in Sri Lanka are less compatible with the attitudes and skills of the organizational participants. Therefore, those innovative programs become simply technical, rather than managerially meaningful to the organizations. According to the above research findings perception towards ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system is varied amongst different individuals, organizations and in certain occasions based on the organization culture. Therefore taking above findings into consideration this study was designed to investigate the managerial attitudes towards ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system in Sri Lanka.

3. Research Methodology

This study is a descriptive study, carried out to investigate the managerial perception towards ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system in Sri Lankan companies. Membership data bases of Ceylon National Chamber of Industries and National Chamber of Exporters were obtained, 100 companies were randomly selected from each data base.

Sample Selection

The below figure depicts the sample selection procedures from existing data bases of
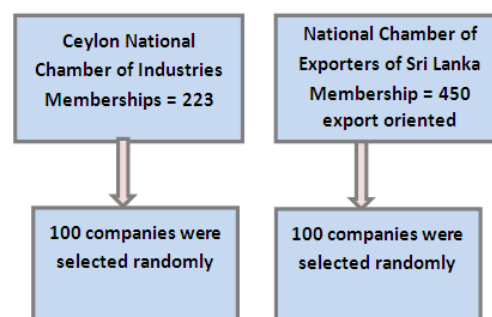

Figure 01 : Sample selection of procedures

The data for the questionnaire were gathered using a self-administered questionnaire. An email survey was conducted to collect the data as per the developed questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed among 200 participating organizations covering, senior managers / management representatives for quality management system and junior managers of selected companies of the membership data bases of two (02) chambers through emails, responses were gathered to an online system using Google Drive. The basic design of the self-administered email questionnaire relied on closed questions a five point Likert scale (1= strong disagreement, 5= Strong agreement), and three point Likert scale (1= Low, 2 = Medium, and 3= High).

75 filled online questionnaires were received, of which 02 questionnaires were partially filled. The balance 73 filled online questionnaires were used for data analysis. This represent 37 percent response rate, which is reasona-

ble compared with other studies in the field of quality management (Dissanayaka et al, 2001). Following the data collection stage the responses were coded for the statistical analysis. The data analysis was carried out using Minitab 16, Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 16 (SPSS 16). Moreover descriptive data were analyzed using Microsoft Since this study is a qualitative research, gathering data pertaining to perception under five point likert scale and three point likert scale, as a non-parametric test this Mann Whitney U test was performed to identify whether there is a significant difference between perception towards ISO 9001: 2008 Excel 2010. This principle component analysis was performed to identify the changes in the perceptions of each parameters analyzed as per the questionnaires.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Background information

The results of the sample distribution by the industry sector is depicted in the figure 02. Of the 73 organizations surveyed 41 percent belong to manufacturing sector, 43 percent of organizations belong to service sector, another 5 percent belong to construction industry and remaining 11 percent represented other categories respectively.
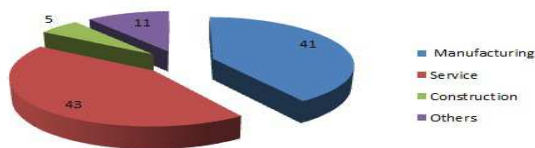

Figure 02 : *Distribution of respondents by sector type as a percentage*

For the purpose of the study organizations with less than 10 employees were categorized as micro organizations, those with 11 to 49 employees were categorized as small organizations, and those with 50 to 249 as medium and those with more than 300 employees as large. With respect to the size of the organizations surveyed 18 percent had staff between 11-49 (Small-sized organizations), 27 percent had staff between 50 to 249 employees (Medium Sized Organizations) whereas 55 percent of had a staff of more than 249 employees (Large Organizations). Moreover, 49 percent of the respondents of surveyed organizations had at least a postgraduate degree.   42 percent of the respondents had a bachelor's degree whereas 9 percent of respondents of the surveyed organizations had a completed their education level up to General Certificate of Education advanced level examination.

In terms of ISO certifications, 44 percent of the responded organizations were certified for ISO 9001: 2008 Quality management systems. This represents a satisfactory rate of certification for quality management.   33 percent of the surveyed organizations had an interest to be certified under ISO 9001: 2008 system certifications. 07 percent of responded organizations which were not certified for ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system had already commenced the system implementation, including preparation of documents pertaining to ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system implementations. 16 percent of organizations surveyed under this research were not interested in implementing ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system certifications.

4.2. Understanding the purposes of ISO 9001: 2008 Quality Management System

Table 01 : *Summary of understanding the purposes of ISO 9001: 2008 Quality Management System between certified organizations*

Purposes of selecting ISO 9001:2008	Certified (N=32)		
	Mean[a]	**SD[b]**	**Rank**
To establish a consistent documentation method	3.44	1.78	1
A means of guaranteeing high grade products/services]	3.38	2.51	2
A new name for not-so-new management practices	3.31	1.40	3
Making the customer the focus of all business processes	2.78	1.79	4
Continuous improvement through problem solving and teamwork	2.59	1.58	5
To establish a quality/formal system]	2.53	1.34	6

Notes: [a] - The mean score is based on participants' level of agreement with each statement on a scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. A mean score above 4 indicates high, between 3 and 4 indicates moderate and a score less than 3 indicates a low level of agreement. [b] ˉSD = standard deviation

As can be seen in the above table 01 the main purpose of ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system is to establish a consistent documentation method (3.44). The second reason was to means of guaranteeing high products and services (3.38), by the certified organizations. The below

table 02 shows the understanding purposes of ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system by the organizations already commenced the system implementation or those interested to be certified for ISO 9001 quality management.

Table 02: Understanding purposes of ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system by organizations already commenced the implementation of system certifications

Purposes of selecting ISO 9001:2008	Certified (N=32 Organizations commenced the implementation of ISO 9001 system certification (N = 29))		
	Mean[a]	SD[b]	Rank
A means of guaranteeing high grade products/services]	4.34	2.09	1
A new name for not-so-new management practices	3.32	1.70	2
Making the customer the focus of all business processes	3.24	1.84	3
To establish a consistent documentation method	3.17	1.71	4
To establish a quality/formal system]	2.72	1.22	5
Continuous improvement through problem solving and teamwork	2.34	1.32	6

Notes: [a] - The mean score is based on participants' level of agreement with each statement on a scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. A mean score above 4 indicates high, between 3 and 4 indicates moderate and a score less than 3 indicates a low level of agreement.   [b] ˉSD = standard deviation

Accordingly the main purpose ISO 9001 : 2008 quality management system by the companies those commenced the system implementation was to provide guaranteeing high grade products / services (4.34) , the second main purpose was a new name for not so new management practices (3.32).

The below figure 03, depicts the contribution made by each parameter for purposes of selecting ISO 9001: 2008 quality management systems by the certified organizations.
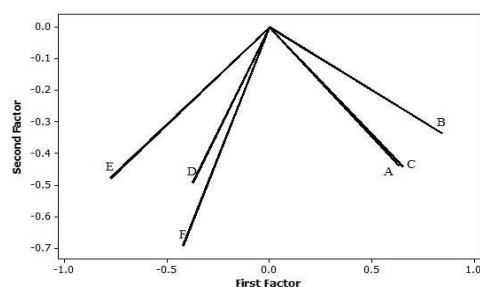

Figure 03: Loading plot of factor analysis, method of extraction is principle component analysis of parameters selecting consider to select ISO9001: 2008 Quality Management system by organizations implemented or commenced ISO 9001 quality management system certification. (Where A – to establish a consistent documentation method, B= A new name for not-so- new management practices, C= Continuous improvement through problem solving and teamwork, D= To establish a quality / formal system, E = Making the customer the focus of all business processes, F= A means of guaranteeing high grade products/ services)

Contribution for each parameter is denoted by the length of each respective line in the plot for each parameter, angle between two lines explains the degree of correlation of parameters. Accordingly, companies interested or already commenced the implementation of ISO 9001 quality management system considered factor F   i.e. a means of guaranteeing high grade products/ services as the main factor for purposes of selecting ISO 9001 quality management system. Whereas factor A (to establish a consistent documentation method) and factor C (continuous improvement through problem solving and teamwork) are highly correlated in purposes of selecting ISO 9001: 2008 quality management systems by Sri Lankan organizations interest-

ed for ISO 9001 or organizations already commenced the quality system implementation.

The below figure 04 shows the contribution for each tested parameter for certified organizations in understanding the purposes of ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system in Sri Lankan organizations.
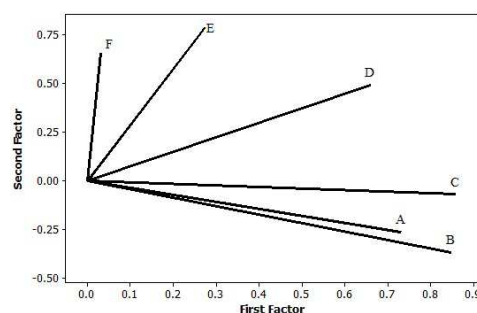

Figure 04: Loading plot of factor analysis, method of extraction is principle component analysis for understanding the purposes of ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system for certified organizations.(Where A – to establish a consistent documentation method, B= A new name for not-so-new management practices, C= Continuous improvement through problem solving and teamwork, D= To establish a quality / formal system, E = Making the customer the focus of all business processes, F= A means of guaranteeing high grade products/ services)

As can be seen from the above figure 4.8, the factor B (A new name for not-so new management practices) is the main contributory factor for certified organizations for ISO 9001 quality management system. Moreover, factor C (continuous improvement through problem solving and teamwork) also contributes in the same manner as the purposes of selecting ISO 9001 quality management system for the certified organizations. Whereas factor F (A means of guaranteeing high grade products/services) has been the least contributory factor for certified organizations to select ISO 9001 certification. Factor A and Factor B are correlated, and provide collective actions in making decisions for ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system certifications.

Table 03: *Statistical significance of parameters analyzed for understanding the purposes of selecting ISO 9001: 2008 quality management systems*

Parameters	P Value [£]	Significance
To establish a consistent documentation method	0.5832	Not significant
A new name for not-so-new management practices	0.9350	Not significant
Continuous improvement through problem solving and teamwork	0.6701	Not significant
To establish a quality/formal system	0.5981	Not significant
Making the customer the focus of all business processes	0.5019	Not significant
A means of guaranteeing high grade products/services	0.1427	Not significant

[£]- Statistical significance was taken at 0.05 levels (95% confidence interval)

As can be seen from the above table 03 , there is no statistical difference between two (02) groups in understanding purposes of selecting ISO 9001: 2008 quality management systems to their organizations, as the calculated P value for each parameter is higher than 0.05

4.3 Motivations for seeking ISO 9001: 2008 Quality Management System Certifications

The literature suggested many reasons as to why companies seek ISO 9001 quality management systems certifications (Buttle, 1997; Lee, 1998; Dissanayaka et al., 2001). These reason s were condensed to 12 reason s in the survey. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of these reason s on a five-point Likert - type scale ranging from 5 = strongly agree to 1= strongly disagree.

Table 04 depicts the motivator s as identified by the respondents, in terms of mean score and standard deviation. It also presents rank ordered responses.

Table 04: *Motivations for seeking ISO 9001: 2008 Quality Management Systems Certifications in certified Sri Lankan companies*

Rank	Motivations for seeking ISO certifications	Certified organizations (N=32)	
		Mean[a]	SD[b]
1	To achieve quality improvement	4.34	0.6
2	To meet corporate objectives	4.34	0.65
3	To market products in the international arena	4.31	0.54
4	To comply with customers' requirements	4.31	0.69
5	To be a step towards TQM	4.28	0.63
6	To improve employees' relations	4.25	0.62
7	To meet government demands, requirements or pressure	4.22	0.87
8	To use ISO as a marketing/promotional tool	4.19	0.54
9	To improve the efficiency of the quality system	4.19	0.47
10	To achieve cost reduction	4.09	0.59
11	To maintain/increase market share	4.03	0.65
12	Pressures from competitors/foreign partners	3.94	0.76

Notes: [a] - The mean score is based on participants' level of agreement with each statement on a scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. A mean score above 4 indicates high, between 3 and 4 indicates moderate and a score less than 3 indicates a low level of agreement. [b] - SD = standard deviation
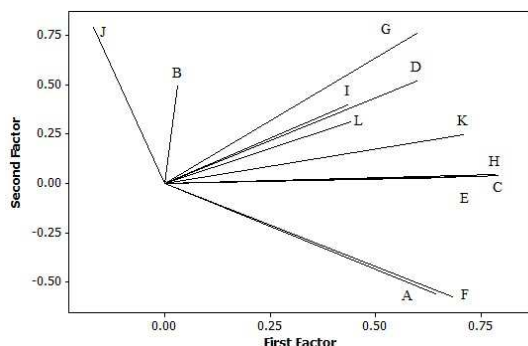

Figure 05 : *Loading plot of factor analysis, method of extraction is Principle Component Analysis of parameters selecting to consider motivations for seeking ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system certifications (where A- To improve the efficiency of quality system, B = Pressures from competitors/ foreign partners, C = To maintain or increase market share,*

D = To meet government demands, requirements or pressure, E= To comply with customers' requirements, F = To achieve quality improvement, G = To markets products in the international arena, H = To use ISO as a marketing / promotional tool, I = To be a step towards TQM, J – To achieve cost reduction, K = To meet corporate objectives, L = To improve employees relations

As can be seen from the above table 04 the leading motivator for seeking ISO 9001 certifications by the organizations seeking for ISO 9001 certifications and companies certified for ISO 9001 certifications was to achieve quality improvement. It is shown that the managers now recognize that the ISO 9001 standard helps for quality improvement of the organization.

The below table depicts the motivations for seeking ISO 9001: 2008 systems certifications among the companies those commenced the system certification.

Table 05 : *Motivations for seeking ISO 9001: 2008 certifications by organizations interested or commenced*

Rank	Motivations for seeking ISO certifications	Organizations commenced the implementation of ISO 9001 system certification (N = 29)	
		Mean[a]	SD[b]
1	To achieve quality improvement	4.38	0.94
2	To market products in the international arena	4.34	0.55
3	To comply with customers' requirements	4.34	0.72
4	To achieve cost reduction	4.21	0.62
5	To meet corporate objectives	4.17	0.60
6	To be a step towards TQM	4.10	0.67
7	To use ISO as a marketing/promotional tool	4.10	0.98
8	To improve employees' relations	4.07	0.70
9	Pressures from competitors/foreign partners	4.03	0.68
10	To meet government demands, requirements or pressure	4.00	0.85
11	To improve the efficiency of the quality system	3.97	0.82
12	To maintain/increase market share	3.97	0.94

Notes: [a] - The mean score is based on participants' level of agreement with each statement on a scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. A mean score above 4 indicates high, between 3 and 4 indicates moderate and a score less than 3 indicates a low level of agreement.   [b] - SD = standard deviation
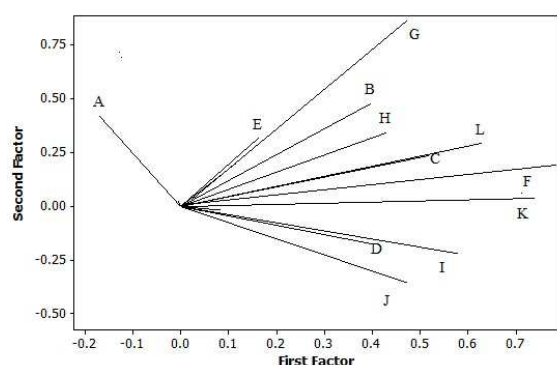

Figure 06: *Loading plot of factor analysis, method of extraction is principle component analysis of parameters selecting to consider motivations for seeking ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system certifications by Certified organizations (where A- To improve the efficiency of quality system, B = Pressures from competitors/ foreign partners, C = To maintain or increase market share, D = To meet government demands, requirements or pressure, E= To comply with customers' requirements, F = To achieve quality improvement, G = To markets products in the international arena, H = To use ISO as a marketing / promotional tool, I = To be a step towards TQM, J – To achieve cost reduction, K = To meet corporate objectives, L = To improve employees relations)*

Factor analysis also performed to identify contribution and correlation made by each motivational factor for seeking ISO 9001: 2008 certifications. Figure 05 depicts the contribution and correlation between parameters analyzed.

The most contributory motivation factor for seeking ISO 9001 certification by the organizations those commenced implementation of quality management system is factor F (To achieve quality improvement). Factor E (To comply with customers' requirements), H (To use ISO as a marketing / promotional tool), C (To maintain or increase market share) are highly correlated. Especially in deciding for certifications, contribution from these three factors collectively involve among the management. The figure 06 shows the contribution and correlation made for parameters analyzed by the ISO 9001 certified organizations.

The most contributory motivational factor for seeking ISO 9001 certification for certified organizations is F (To achieve quality improvement). whereas the second most contributory factor for is K (To meet corporate objectives). Moreover the factor G (to market products in the international arena) is also the third most important contributory motivation factor for seeking ISO 9001 certification

Table 06 : *Statistical significance for analyzed motivational factors for seeking ISO 9001: 2008 certification between two groups*

Statement	P value [∈]	Statistical significance
To improve the efficiency of the quality system	0.4145	Not significant
Pressures from competitors/foreign partners	0.7073	Not significant
To maintain/increase market share	0.9654	Not significant
To meet government demands, requirements or pressure	0.2787	Not significant
To comply with customers' requirements	0.8117	Not significant
To achieve quality improvement	0.3942	Not significant

Statement	P value $^\epsilon$	Statistical significance
To market products in the international arena	0.8341	Not significant
To use ISO as a marketing/promotional tool	0.8533	Not significant
To be a step towards TQM	0.3862	Not significant
To achieve cost reduction	0.5204	Not significant
To meet corporate objectives	0.3261	Not significant
To improve employees' relations	0.3667	Not significant

$^\epsilon$- Statistical significance was taken at 0.05 level (95% confidence interval)

4.4. Perceived benefits from ISO 9001:2008 certifications in Sri Lankan organizations

Assessments were undertaken to identify the perceived benefits from implementing ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system in Sri Lankan organizations. It is often difficult to quantify the benefits due to their nature, whether tangible or intangible. Table 7 and table 8 summarize number of benefits extracted from literature to undertake the research. The participants were asked to rank high, medium, or low (where 1- low, 2- medium and 3 – high).

Table 07: Perceived benefits from implementing ISO 9001: 2008 in companies certified for ISO 9001 quality management system in Sri Lanka

Rank	Parameter	Mean	SD	Ranking level
1	Customer satisfaction	2.84	0.59	High
2	Increases quality awareness	2.75	0.54	High
3	Improves employee productivity	2.75	0.57	High
4	Helps develop quality mgt.	2.75	0.55	High
5	Improves the efficiency of the quality system	2.69	0.44	High
6	Improves product/service quality	2.66	0.61	High
7	Product development tool	2.63	0.57	High
8	Promotional tool	2.59	0.40	Medium
9	Reduces costs	2.56	0.42	Medium
10	Improves employee motivation	2.56	0.41	Medium
11	Helps supplier selection	2.53	0.43	Medium
12	Improves employee relations	2.50	0.50	Medium
13	Improves export potential	2.49	0.50	Medium
14	Improves public relations	2.47	0.50	Medium
15	Improves documentation	2.47	0.49	Low
16	Reduces production time	2.38	0.53	Low

As can be seen from the above table 07, the most important perceived benefits from implementing ISO 9001 in Sri Lankan certified companies could be summarized as follows,

1. Customer satisfaction (2.84)
2. Increase quality awareness (2.75)

3. Improves employee productivity (2.75)
4. Helps to develop quality management (2.75)
5. Improves the efficiency of the quality system (2.69)
6. Improves the product / service quality (2.66)
7. Product development tool (2.63)

Table 08: Perceived benefits from implementing ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system in organizations those commenced the system implementation

Rank	Parameter	Mean	SD	Ranking level
1	Customer satisfaction	2.72	0.60	High
2	Reduces production time	2.69	0.63	High
3	Increases quality awareness	2.62	0.60	High
4	Improves product/service quality	2.59	0.50	High
5	Helps develop quality mgt	2.59	0.57	High
6	Improves employee productivity	2.59	0.55	High
7	Improves employee relations	2.55	0.53	High
8	Product development tool	2.55	0.55	High
9	Improves the efficiency of the quality system	2.52	0.45	Medium
10	Reduces costs	2.52	0.49	Medium
11	Improves employee motivation	2.41	0.57	Medium
12	Helps supplier selection	2.41	0.57	Medium
13	Promotional tool	2.34	0.57	Medium
14	Improves documentation	2.31	0.51	Medium
15	Improves public relations	2.31	0.47	Low
16	Improves export potential	1.97	0.57	Low

Accordingly, the most important perceived benefits in implementing ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system in the organizations already commenced the system certifications is given below.

1. Customer satisfaction (2.72)
2. Reduces production time (2.69)
3. Increases quality awareness (2.62)
4. Improves product / service quality (2.59)
5. Helps to develop quality management (2.59)
6. Improves employee productivity (2.59)
7. Improves employee relations (2.55)
8. Product development tool (2.55)

5. Conclusion

As far as the Sri Lankan situation is concerned 44 percent of the surveyed organizations were certified for ISO 9001: 2008 quality management systems, whereas 40 percent of the surveyed organizations were interested for ISO 9001 and already commenced the system certification to implement quality management system within the organizations, which is fairly good rate in terms of ensuring quality within the Sri Lankan organizations.

As per the impact surveys carried out by United Nations Industrial Development Organization in year 2009, and as per the ISO survey 678 companies inclusive of all sectors were certified for ISO 9001 quality management system by the end of year December, 2009. This shows the interest and higher managerial perception towards ensuring quality management system within Sri Lankan organizations.

According to the current study, the perception towards the ISO 9001: 2008 perception between certified organizations and companies those commenced the management system implementation are different, although it is statistically insignificant as per the Mann Whitney U test. The loading plot for factor analysis clearly depicts the differences of parameters analyzed between two groups. For instance the main purpose of the certified organizations was to establish a consistent documentation system whereas organizations those commenced the system implementation's purpose is to provide guaranteeing high grade products / services.   The survey done by Magd and Curry (2003) concluded that the main purpose of understanding ISO 9001 certification was to establish consistent documentation system within Egyptian companies. However it could be confirmed that the certified organizations of Sri Lanka, require establishing a consistent documentation system, in contrast to organizations already commenced system implementation (proceeding organizations for Quality Management System).

As far as the motivational factors seeking for ISO 9001 certifications are concerned, the main contributory factors for both groups for seeking ISO 9001 certification was to achieve quality improvement. However it has been identified that there are some differences between perceptions of seeking ISO 9001 between two groups as per the loading plot of factor analysis based on principle component analysis. Moreover the ISO 9001: 2008 certified organizations seeking certifications as one of their corporate objectives, and both groups are seeking ISO 9001 certifications to market products / services in the international arena. Whereas the companies certified for ISO 9001 seeking certifications to achieve cost reductions, on the other hand other group (proceeding organizations/ organizations already commenced system implementation) do not consider factor J (to achieve cost reduction).   Therefore this factor could be used as a tool to promote continuous quality improvement such as six sigma in the long run. On the other hand organizations those commenced the system implementation, were concerned about highly correlated factors (Factor E =

To comply with customers' requirements, H= To use ISO as a marketing / promotional tool, C= To maintain/ increase market share)

This study being one of the first attempt to investigate the management attitudes towards ISO 9001 international standard in Sri Lankan companies, have concluded that there is a positive attitude towards ISO 9001: 2008 quality management systems, both certified companies and organizations those commenced the system implementations to be certified for ISO 9001: 2008, for understanding the purposes, seeking for ISO 9001: 2008 quality management system certification and had perceived benefits of implementing quality management systems within their organizations irrespective of their sector and type of the organizations.

Implementation of ISO 9001: 2008 is a tool for understanding products and processes, however by itself will not solve existing problems or guarantee quality. Therefore, in order to achieve the true commercial values associated with it, it should be made consistent with organization's strategic decisions. This refers to using the standard as a foundation for a much broader system such as total quality management. Furthermore organizations certified for ISO 9001: 2008 could more focus on the continuous quality improvement in order to serve the patrons in different and delightful manner in the long run.

The credibility of the ISO 9001: 2008 certificate is crucial in today's context as many certification bodies are profit oriented and focusing on the business, hence possessing of a ISO 9001: 2008 certificate will not always guarantee effective implementation and continual improvements in the system. This could be a one of the major limitations of the study. Since there are more certification bodies exist in Sri Lanka including, national, multinational and local certification bodies, it is vital to investigate the credibility of accredited ISO 9001: 2008 certification offered by each certification bodies. Therefore future research areas shall focus on credibility, efficiency and effectiveness of issuing ISO 9001: 2008 quality management systems certifications by established certification bodies in Sri Lanka

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